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ABSTRACT

Focusing on the migrant farmworkers in eight South Carolina counties which employed a large number of migrants, the situational study examined some of their socioeconomic characteristics and problems. A questionnaire was administered to obtain data on: the number and location of migrants, racial and family composition, family economy, housing situation, children's education, health situation, and social environment. Of the 366 migrant workers interviewed during the summer of 1971, 294 had families. The study showed that the problem of the children's education was effectively handled through the Summer Migrant Program of the State Department of Education. Free medical assistance was provided for some of the migrants in several county health clinics. The most critical problem for the migrants was their housing conditions. They had no choice except to live in substandard housing. Charleston County provided three county operated camps for migrants; however, these accommodated only a few of the migrants who came into Charleston County. Another major problem faced by the migrants was their low earning power. Most of them had no cash savings accumulated. Social outlets for the migrants and their children were quite limited. Migrants visited the towns only to shop and to visit the health clinics. Otherwise, their social activities were confined to their camps. (Author/NQ)

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SITUATIONAL STUDY OF MIGRANT FARMWORKERS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

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ABSTRACT

Perishable fruit and vegetable crops must be harvested within a short period of time to maintain market quality. Approximately 9,000 migrant farmworkers are employed in South Carolina every year to harvest these crops. Migrant farmworkers pose some economic, health, housing and other social problems to local communities through which they pass. The East Coast stream of migrants, as it passes through South Carolina, is the main focus of this study.

A sample of 366 migrant farmworkers was interviewed in those counties of South Carolina which employ a large number of migrants. Since the migrants who come with families face more problems in terms of housing and education of children, the majority of migrants interviewed in this study had families.

This study showed that the problem of the education of migrant children is effectively handled through the Summer Migrant Program of the South Carolina State Department of Education. Free medical assistance is also provided for some of the migrants in several county health clinics. The most critical problem for the migrants concerns their housing conditions. They have no choice except to live in substandard housing. Charleston county provides three county operated camps for the migrants; however, these three camps accommodate only a few of the migrants who come into Charleston county. Another major problem faced by the migrants is their low earning power. Most of those surveyed had no cash savings accumulated. Social outlets for the migrants and their children were quite limited. Migrants visited the towns only to shop and to visit the health clinics. Otherwise, their social activities were confined to their camps.

INTRODUCTION

A substantial part of farm resources in South Carolina is assigned to fruit and truck farming. These crops are highly perishable and must be harvested with a specific time period in order to maintain market quality. The usual peak season for harvesting commercial vegetables in this area is from June 1 to August 1. The peach harvest season is from June 15 to August 15.

The capabilities for mechanical harvest of many of these fruits and vegetables are quite limited; therefore, the harvest is dependent upon large quantities of hand labor. Since local communities do not have a sufficient resident labor force to handle the peak season harvest, they must depend upon migrant farmworkers. Accurate estimates are hard to find, but it is believed that approximately 9,000 migrant farmworkers are employed each year in South Carolina. The Employment Securities Commission in South Carolina maintains some records of migrant workers who pass through the state. Many employers of migrant workers do not encourage migrants to register with the Employment Securities Commission in fear that the Commission will inspect and disapprove of their housing conditions; consequently, a number of migrants are not accounted for in the official reports.

Senator Williams' report describes the travel pattern of migrant farmworkers in the United States.[1] Migratory workers travel northward by three major routes from states along the southern border of the country. The mainstream flows to the North and West from Texas. A substantial number of these workers are Mexican-Americans. A second major migratory group starts in Southern California and works northward through the Pacific Coast states.

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1. Senator Harrison A. Williams, The Migrant Farm Labor Problem in the U.S.A.; a Resolution submitted to the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, February 1969.

The majority of these workers are also Mexican-Americans. A third and smaller stream draws migrants from Florida; they travel through Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia and other Middle Atlantic states, to New England and return to the Southeastern States for the winter. Blacks constitute a large proportion of the East Coast stream. It is this third stream, as it passes through South Carolina, on which this study is focused.

Though the migrant workers make a substantial contribution to the harvesting of fruit and truck crops, they also pose problems for local communities. Some of the problems created are economic, educational, health, housing, social, legal and others of lesser importance. The intensity and magnitude of the problems generated by migrant workers have become a major concern for county and state administrators. This study attempts to make an objective analysis of these conditions. The results of this analysis may assist local and state agencies in finding remedies for some of these problems.

Objectives

The overall objective of this study is to examine some of the socio-economic characteristics and problems of migrant farmworkers in selected counties of South Carolina. More specific objectives are to make a situational study of migrant farmworkers relating to:

(1) their family economic conditions

(2) education of their children

(3) their health

(4) the housing and sanitation conditions in and around their camps

(5) their social environment

Procedures

Data collected in this study were taken from eight counties of the state. A questionnaire was developed that sought the: 1) number and location of migrants, 2) racial composition, 3) family composition, 4) family economy, 5) housing situation, 6) education of children, 7) health situation, and 8) social environment.

Usually it is difficult to get into migrant workers' camps to make interviews. For this reason, the enumerators were selected from those people who worked in some capacity with the migrants. These enumerators, for the most part, were local public school teachers and religious ministers of local churches. Enumerators did not go into all camps, however, because some owners refused to cooperate with this project.

Since a migrant family faces more problems in terms of housing accommodations and children's education than does the single migrant worker, an attempt was made to concentrate on migrant families. Out of 366 migrant workers surveyed, 294 had families and 72 came alone.

This survey was conducted during the summer of 1971 between May 15 and August 31. This is the peak harvest period for fruits and vegetables in South Carolina. These data were treated in the analysis that follows.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The location of the counties from which data were collected are shown in Figure 1 of the next page. The number of migrants surveyed from each of the eight counties are as follows:

County	Number of Migrants Surveyed
Aiken	11
Beaufort	50
Charleston	100
Edgefield	38
Hampton	50
Jasper	35
Saluda	39
Spartanburg	43
Total	366

Aiken, Edgefield, Saluda, and Spartanburg Counties are primarily peach growing areas. The remaining counties grow melons, tomatoes, beans or other truck crops. Since no noticeable differences were found in the characteristics of migrant workers on the basis of crops harvested or the county where they worked, an analysis will not be presented on these bases.

Racial Composition

The two streams of migrant workers in the Southwest and West are mainly made up of Mexican-Americans while the third stream, on the East Coast, contains a majority of blacks. The racial composition of migrant workers studied is shown in Table 1. Of the 366 migrant workers surveyed, 60.1 percent were native black; 10.1 percent were white; 16.4 percent were Latin Americans and 13.4 percent belonged to other ethnic groups. The Latin Americans came exclusively from the Caribbean Islands and were all black.

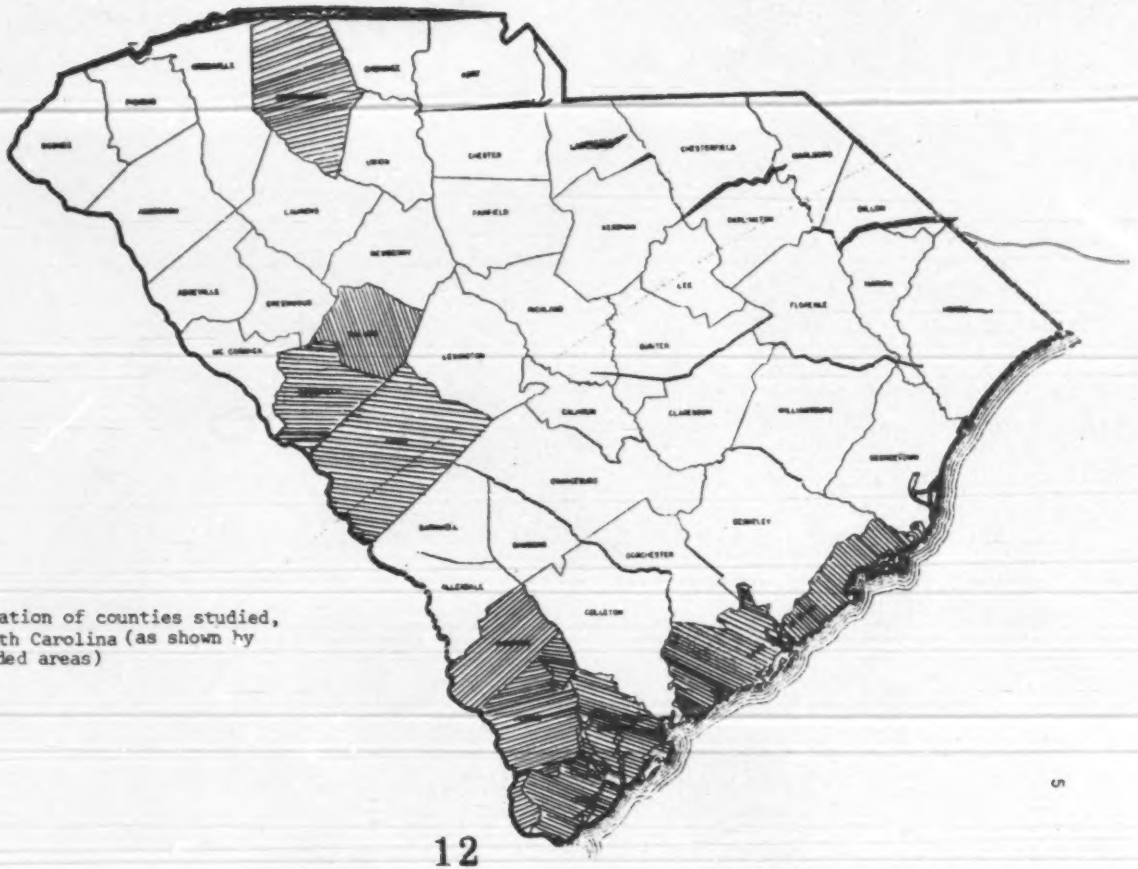

FIGURE 1: Location of counties studied, South Carolina (as shown by shaded areas)

Since the various racial groups of migrant workers did not show any significant differences of characteristics studied, no attempt was made in this report to present the data on the basis of racial groups other than in Table 1.

TABLE 1

RACIAL COMPOSITION OF MIGRANTS SURVEYED, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

Race	Migrant without Families	Migrant with Families	Total	
			Number	Percentage
Black	37	184	221	60.1
White	6	31	37	10.1
Latin American	28	32	60	16.4
American Indian	1	0	1	0.5
Other	0	47	47	12.9
	72	294	366	100.0

Family Composition and Economy

Family Composition

Family composition and related characteristics of the migrant workers surve are shown in Table 2. A total of 366 migrants were surveyed of which 294 came with families and 72 without families. It can be seen from Table 2 that 87.4 percent of the 294 family heads were males and 12.6 percent were females. Appro mately 85.7 percent of these migrant family heads were in the age group of 20 to 55 years. The educational level of the migrant farmworkers was rather low. Of the 366 migrant farmworkers surveyed, 8.2 percent had no education at all and 62 percent had less than a 10th grade education. It may be noted that 29.8 percent

TABLE 2

FAMILY COMPOSITION AND RELATED CHARACTERISTICS
OF MIGRANTS SURVEYED, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

Family Members	Sex		Age in Years								Marital Status 1/					Education 2/				
	Male	Female	up to 6	6-11	12-19	20-29	30-39	40-54	55-64	over 65	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Migrants with Families																				
Household Head	257	37	-	-	8	85	81	86	29	5	48	181	16	11	38	27	23	75	82	87
Spouse	2	242	-	-	25	87	61	60	9	2	45	176	-	4	19	60	16	30	64	74
Sons	473	-	107	125	150	72	18	1	-	-	408	62	1	1	1	100	60	112	113	88
Daughters	-	416	109	132	126	43	6	-	-	-	358	58	-	-	-	113	57	102	101	43
Others	9	-	3	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	3	1	2	1	2
Migrants without Families																				
Individuals	66	6	-	-	5	27	16	20	4	-	52	-	3	7	10	3	3	22	22	22
TOTALS	807	701	219	250	317	314	182	167	42	7	920	477	20	23	68	306	160	343	383	316

1/ Marital Status

1 = Never Married
2 = Married
3 = Widowed
4 = Divorced
5 = Separated

2/ Education

1 = None
2 = Less than 3rd
3 = 3rd to 6th grade
4 = 7th to 9th grade
5 = 10th and above

these migrants had completed 10 grades or more in school. The average number of children per family was three.

During the spring of 1971, the vegetable crops were damaged by heavy rains in the coastal areas, and a hail storm had damaged the peach crops in the northern portion of the state. This resulted in more migrant workers coming alone rather than bringing their families because less work than usual was available for them.

Family Economy

Employment: Good harvest seasons provide good employment opportunities to migrant workers. If the crops are poor, as they were in the spring of 1971, it could mean less work and consequently lower income. Whatever may be the condition of the crops, there are two other important variables which might affect the amount of work the migrants will be able to do when they arrive at a given location. The first factor is the bad weather, such as heavy rains, often reduces the harvest. The second factor is the availability of other work. The migrants work on a piecework basis. When the harvest is completed on one farm, they have to locate another employer whose crop may be ready to harvest. These factors do not assure continuous employment for the migrant workers.

Table 3 shows the employment and economic status of the migrants surveyed. Of the 366 migrant farmworkers surveyed, 12.8 percent worked four days or less per week; 47.3 percent worked five days per week; 34.4 percent worked six days per week; and 5.5 percent worked seven days per week. The migrants who came without their families usually worked five to six days per week.

Since the migrant workers are paid according to the amount of work they do, it is advantageous for them to bring more family members along. Of the 294 migrants who came with their families, 91 reported only one family member working

TABLE 3

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS SURVEYED, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

	Migrants with Families	Migrants without Families	Total Number	Total Percentage
Number of days worked per week	294	72	366	100.0
Two or less	-	-	-	-
Three	11	6	17	4.6
Four	28	2	30	8.2
Five	143	30	173	47.3
Six	92	34	126	34.4
Seven	20	-	20	5.5
Number of family members employed	294	72	366	100.0
One	91	72	163	44.5
Two	139	-	139	38.0
Three	39	-	39	10.7
Four or more	25	-	25	6.8
Earnings per day	294	72	366	100.0
Less than $10	32	9	41	11.2
$10 - $19	127	50	177	48.4
$20 - $29	88	13	101	27.6
$30 - $39	32	-	32	8.7
$40 or more	15	-	15	4.1
Cost of living per week	294	72	366	100.0
Do not know	13	1	14	3.8
Less than $40	123	62	185	50.5
$40 - $49	73	7	80	21.9
$50 - $59	35	1	36	9.8
$60 - $69	20	-	20	5.5
$70 or more	30	1	31	8.5
Cash savings	294	72	366	100.0
Yes	53	4	57	15.6
No	241	68	309	84.4

TABLE 3 continued

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS SURVEYED, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

	Migrants with Families	Migrants without Families	Total Number	Total Percentage
Amount of cash savings	53	4	57	100.0
Less than $100	17	2	19	33.3
$100 - $199	17	1	18	31.6
$200 - $299	5	-	5	8.8
$300 or more	14	1	15	26.3

TABLE 4

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF MIGRANTS SURVEYED,
SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

	Migrants with Families		Migrants without Families	Total	
	Head	Spouse		Number	Percentage
Total	294	244	72	610	100.0
Working (full time)	229	107	58	394	64.5
Working (part time)	59	54	13	126	20.7
Unemployed	2	14	-	16	2.6
Housewife	1	62	-	63	10.3
Student in school	-	-	1	1	.2
Disabled	3	7	-	10	1.7

139 reported 2; 39 reported 3 and 25 reported 4 or more family members working. This does not include the help rendered by their children after school.

Wage rates are negotiated by the crew leader and the employer. The employer pays the crew leader who, in turn, pays the individual migrants after deducting his share of the wages. In many cases usually, the individual migrants do not know the wage rates negotiated by the crew leader and the employer.

Income and Expenditures: It could be observed from Table 3 that 59 percent of the migrants surveyed made less that $20 per day; 29 percent made between $20 to $29 and only 13 percent made more than $30. Those migrants making more than $30 per day were usually those with more than one family member working. None of the migrants without families made more than $30 per day.

When asked about their cost of living, 50.5 percent of all the migrants studied reported it to be less than $40 per week; 21.0 percent did not know and 28.8 percent reported their cost of living to be more than $50 per week. People with large families reported a higher cost of living. These figures include charges paid to the crew leader for transportation, upkeep of buses and trucks and other such expenses.

Cash Savings: Comparison of the figures for income and expenditures discussed above suggest some cash savings on the part of migrant workers, but it can be seen from Table 3 that only 57 out of 366 migrants surveyed reported any cash savings. Of these 57 migrants, 65 percent reported less than $200 in cash savings, while only 26.3 percent reported more than $300 in cash savings. Of all the migrants surveyed, only 4.1 percent had more than $300 in cash savings.

Considering the efforts exerted by the migrant workers, the figures for cash savings are rather low. It is possible that their expenses are not as low as they say. This possibility coupled with an income that is not continuously assured at any location along their way, could result in little, if any, cash savings for the migrant workers. The conducting of this survey during the initial stages of the migrants stay in South Carolina may have been another factor contributing to their reports of reduced savings. One could expect this last factor to have been offset by the savings from their previous location before coming to South Carolina. To some extent, there may be a reluctance on the part of migrants to disclose their cash savings.

Public Assistance: Only 18 of the 366 migrants studied were receiving some sort of public assistance payments (Table 5). Two of them were receiving old age assistance; seven were receiving disability payments; four were receiving general assistance; and five were receiving aid to dependent children. Only 86, or 23.5 percent, of the 366 migrants studied were receiving food stamps.

Housing Situation

In most cases, farmers in South Carolina who want to employ migrant workers and the migrants who want work use the Employment Securities Commission as a middleman. Before a migrant worker can be hired, the employer is obligated to provide housing which meets Federal standards. Federal standards require 50 square feet of space for each occupant, and the regulations concerning window space, bathroom facilities, etc., are also specified.[2]

2: Jim Haney, a newspaper article, "5,000 Migrant Workers Visit State Each Year," The Columbia Record (July 23, 1970).

TABLE 5

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE TO MIGRANTS
SURVEYED, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

	Migrants with Families	Migrants without Families	Total Number	Total Percentage
Recipients of public assistance payments	294	72	366	100.0
Yes	18	-	18	4.9
No	276	72	348	95.1
Type of public assistance payments	18	0	18	100.0
Old Age assistance	2	-	2	11.1
Disability payments	7	-	7	38.9
General assistance	4	-	4	22.2
Aid to Dependent Children	5	-	5	27.8
Recipients of Food Stamps	294	72	366	100.0
Yes	81	5	86	23.5
No	213	67	280	76.5

If all the Federal standards concerning housing were observed, the cost of housing would make the migrant labor more expensive to the farmers. To avoid meeting these standards, several farmers by-pass the Employment Securities Commission and hire the migrants directly. These migrant workers do not register with the Commission and, thus, do not become a part of the official statistics. Migrants from this group frequently have to live in substandard housing. Most of the employers who did not allow our enumerators to interview migrants were those whose workers were not registered with the Commission; therefore, the following data are for those migrant camps that permitted enumerators to enter.

Owner of the House

Of the 366 migrants surveyed, 77.3 percent lived in camps owned by private individuals; 11.5 percent lived in county owned camps; 4.6 percent lived in camps owned by private organizations; and 6.6 percent did not know the owners of the house in which they lived (Table 6A). Only Charleston County had camps owned by the county. Because the three camps owned by Charleston County were not enough to house all workers, many migrants had to live in privately owned camps. Sometimes, private organizations, such as farmer cooperatives, provide housing for the migrants who work for member farmers.

TABLE 6A

HOUSING INFORMATION OF MIGRANTS SURVEYED, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

	Migrants with Families	Migrants without Families	Total Number	Total Percentage
Owner of the house	294	72	366	100.0
Do not know	15	9	24	6.6
Private individuals	222	61	283	77.3
Private organizations	17	-	17	4.6
County owned	40	2	42	11.5
Rent per week	294	72	366	100.0
Do not know	87	-	87	23.8
$5 or less	149	62	211	57.6
$6 - $9	11	-	11	3.0
$10 - $14	37	1	38	10.4
$15 or more	10	9	19	5.2
Nature of housing	294	72	366	100.0
Unpartitioned	16	1	17	4.6
Partitioned	214	59	300	82.0
Individual housing units	37	12	49	13.4
Rooms per family	294	72	366	100.0
One	217	72	289	79.0
Two	44	-	44	12.0
Three or more	33	-	33	9.0
Number of families in the house	294	72	366	100.0
Only one	44	3	47	12.9
Two	30	3	33	9.0
Three	50	2	52	14.2
Four	43	11	54	14.7
Five	28	6	34	9.3
Six	18	18	36	9.8
Seven	10	6	16	4.4
Eight or more	69	22	91	24.9
Not applicable	2	1	3	0.8

TABLE 6B

HOUSING INFORMATION OF MIGRANTS
SURVEYED, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

	Migrant with Families	Migrant without Families	Total Number	Total Percentage
Type of roof covering for the house	294	72	366	100.0
Do not know	6	1	7	1.9
Wood shingles	66	14	80	21.9
Asbestos shingles	60	14	74	20.2
Tar paper	19	14	33	9.0
Tin	143	29	172	47.0
Type of exterior walls of the house	294	72	366	100.0
Wood siding	95	23	118	32.2
Stucco	1	-	1	0.3
Asbestos siding	6	12	18	4.9
Brick	94	11	105	28.7
Cinder block	56	17	73	20.0
Other	42	9	51	13.9
Type of floor	294	72	366	100.0
Dirt	185	42	227	62.0
Concrete	83	22	105	28.7
Wooden	26	8	34	9.3
Sanitary sewage disposal facility	294	72	366	100.0
Yes	107	37	144	39.3
No	187	35	222	60.0

TABLE 6 C

HOUSING INFORMATION OF MIGRANTS SURVEYED, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

	Migrants with Families	Migrants without Families	Total Number	Total Percentage
Type of bathroom facilities	294	72	366	100.0
Inside house - private use	41	17	58	15.9
Inside house - public use	50	5	55	15.0
Outside house - common for camp	103	50	253	69.1
Inside plumbing	294	72	366	100.0
Yes	123	38	161	44.0
No	171	34	205	56.0
Inside plumbing with hot and cold water	123	38	161	100.0
Yes	86	17	103	64.0
No	37	21	58	36.0
Major source of water	123	38	161	100.0
Piped to outside of house	108	27	135	63.8
Hand pump	7	11	18	11.2
Well	3	-	3	1.9
Water haul	5	-	5	3.1

TABLE 6D

HOUSING INFORMATION OF MIGRANTS SURVEYED, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

	Migrants with Families	Migrants without Families	Total Number	Total Percentage
Do their own cooking	294	72	366	100.0
Yes	174	23	197	53.8
No	120	49	169	46.2
Separate kitchen for each family	174	31	205	100.0
Yes	72	-	72	35.1
No	102	31	133	64.9
Number of families sharing common kitchen	102	31	133	100.0
Two	19	2	21	15.8
Three	17	3	20	15.0
Four	25	9	34	25.6
Five or more	41	17	58	43.6

The rent paid by the majority of the migrants was less than $5 per week. Some migrants did not know the amount of rent that they were paying. This may have been because some crew leaders paid the rent to the owners and deducted it from the wages of workers.

Nature of Housing

It can be seen from Table 6A that 300 of the 366 migrants were living in housing units which were partitioned; 17 were living in unpartitioned housing; and 49 were living in individual housing units. "Unpartitioned housing" refers to large halls in which more than one family lives.

Details of the nature of migrant housing, contained in Tables 6B and 6C, indicate that most of the migrants were living in houses which had dirt floors and tin roofs, with common bathroom facilities for the whole camp. Of the 161 migrants who reported having inside plumbing, 103 had both hot and cold water. Sanitary disposal facilities were not available for 222 of the 366 migrant workers surveyed.

Of the 197 migrants who did their own cooking, 72 had individual cooking facilities (Table 6D). The remaining had to share the kitchen with other families. For those 169 migrants who did not cook, meals were provided by the crew leader for a charge. In this case, the meals were usually prepared by the wife of the crew leader.

Education of Children

Besides housing conditions, another important problem faced by the migrant workers is the education of their children. Since the migrant families moved from one state to another during the year, the education of their children was

disrupted. A good education is the most important device through which the children of migrant workers may be able to break away from the migrant stream.

Since 1961, the South Carolina State Department of Education has been conducting summer programs for migrant children. The purposes of this program are to provide the migratory child with the educational opportunities needed to overcome learning deficiencies and to help provide the essential food, clothing and medical services necessary to eliminate those physical deficiencies which might interfere with the child's ability to learn. There were 10 such centers operating in 1970 with an enrollment of 773 migrant children.[3] The locations of educational centers for migrant children in South Carolina are shown in Figure 2.

Educational Information of Children

Educational information about the children of migrant farmworkers is shown in Table 7. Out of 294 families surveyed, 143 reported having school age children. When asked about the number of months their children were in school during 1970-71, 124 of the 143 parents said that their children were in school for 7 to 9 months; 4 reported less than 6 months; and 4 reported their children have more than 9 months of school. Eleven parents could not say how long their children went to school during that year.

Of the 143 migrants with children, 116 reported that migrant educational centers were available for their children; 14 indicated that they were not available, while the remaining did not know of the existence of such centers. Those who said that migrant educational centers were not available for their children were mostly from Jasper and Saluda counties. The migrant parents

3. South Carolina Migrant Program, published by the South Carolina State Department of Education, 1970.

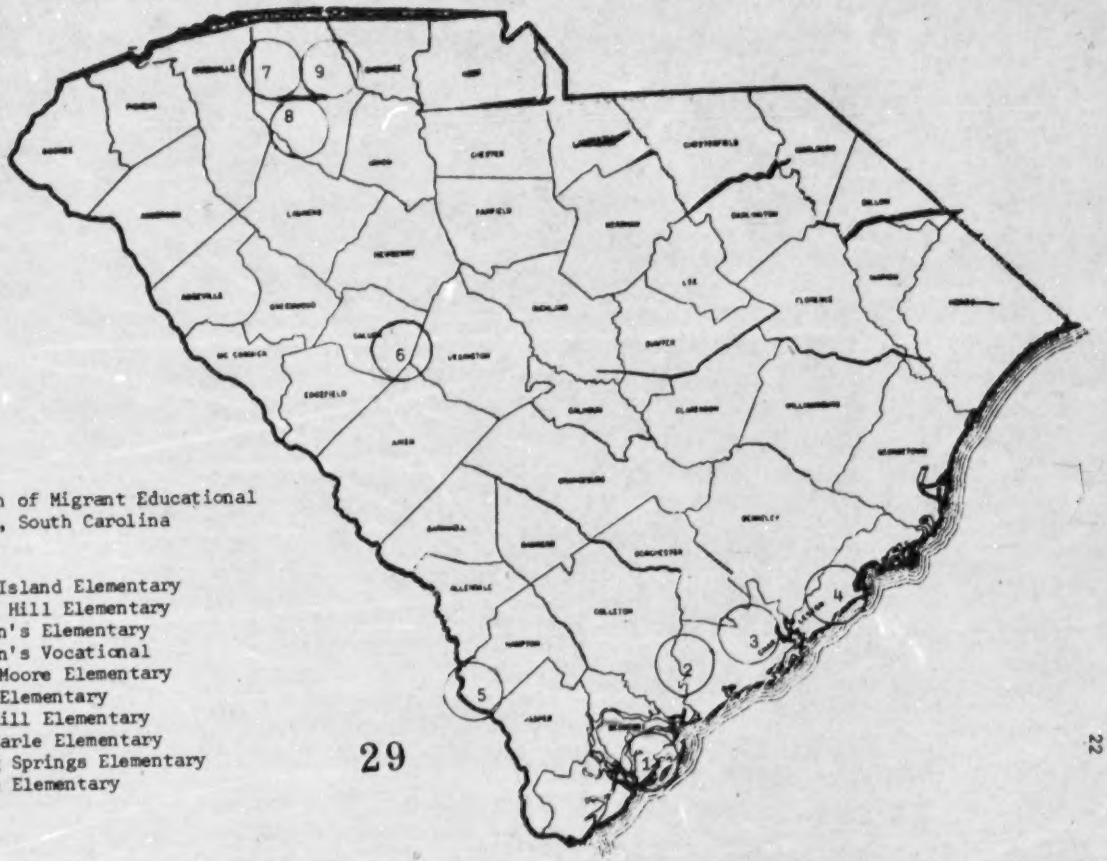

FIGURE 2: Location of Migrant Educational Centers, South Carolina

1. Lady's Island Elementary
2. Baptist Hill Elementary
3. St. John's Elementary
   St. John's Vocational
4. Jennie Moore Elementary
5. Estill Elementary
6. Ridge Hill Elementary
7. O. P. Earle Elementary
8. Boiling Springs Elementary
9. Chesnee Elementary

TABLE 7

EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION OF THE CHILDREN OF MIGRANTS SURVEYED, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

	Total	Percentage
Months in school this year	143	100.0
Do not know	11	7.7
3 or less months	2	1.4
4 to 6 months	2	1.4
7 to 9 months	124	86.7
More than 9 months	4	2.8
Availability of Migrant Educational Centers	143	100.0
Do not know	13	9.1
Yes	116	81.1
No	14	9.8
Meals children get at school	143	100.0
None	29	20.3
Only breakfast	-	0
Only lunch	8	5.6
Breakfast and lunch	91	63.6
Breakfast, lunch and snacks	15	10.5
Receive medical attention at the Center	143	100.0
Do not know	31	21.7
Yes	100	69.9
No	12	8.4

who did not know of the existence of such centers were mostly from Aiken, Edgefield, and Saluda counties.

Though the migrant educational centers provide meals and medical attention to children, a small number of migrants, for some reason, indicated that such services were not provided (Table 7).

Parents' Views of Children's Future

Migrant parents' views concerning education and careers of their children are shown on Table 8. When asked about the level of education that their children should have to get along in the world, the majority of the migrant parents indicated that the children should finish college or, at least, have some college education. On the other hand, when asked about how much education their children are likely to get, the majority of the parents indicated that it will be between 8 and 12 grades.

Most of the parents had no idea of the careers that their children will achieve. A small number of them indicated that their children will be either farm or non-farm laborers, while 39.2 percent expected their children to have semi-professional careers.

TABLE 8

MIGRANT PARENTS' VIEWS CONCERNING EDUCATION AND CAREER OF THEIR CHILDREN, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

	Total	Percentage
How much education should children get?	143	100.0
Do not know	10	7.0
None	-	-
1 - 5 grades	-	-
6 - 9 grades	7	4.9
10 - 12 grades	48	33.5
Finish college	59	41.3
Some college	19	13.3
How much education will children get?	143	100.0
Do not know	31	21.7
None	-	-
Less than 8 grades	1	0.7
8 - 12 grades	74	51.7
More than 12 grades	37	25.9
Parents' views of children career	143	100.0
Do not know	62	43.3
Farmworker	10	7.0
Non-farm laborer	14	9.8
Domestic laborer	1	0.7
Food service	-	-
Security	-	-
Semi-professional	38	26.6
Clerical and sales	-	-
Professional	18	12.6

Health Situation

In the preceding sections, the data concerning the migrants were grouped separately for those with families and those without families. In this section and the following ones, such grouping would be meaningless; consequently, only the aggregate data are presented.

Physical Examinations and Hospitalization

The most common illnesses reported by the migrants were high blood pressure, respiratory disorders, and diabetes. History of physical examinations and hospitalization for the migrants surveyed is reported in Table 9. Of the 366 migrants surveyed, 161 had not had a physical examination within the past year. One hundred fifty-two migrants had had physical examinations three or more years ago. When asked about their hospitalization for illness, 188 of them were never hospitalized; 106 were hospitalized three or more years ago; and the remaining were hospitalized within the last three-year period.

Availability of Medical Facilities

The availability of medical facilities to migrants surveyed is shown in Table 10. Of the 366 migrants surveyed, 309 had the services of a doctor available, while 8 of them did not, and the remaining 49 were not sure about it. When asked about the availability of a free clinic, 295 said "yes," 6 said "no," and 65 were not sure about it. It could be concluded from the preceding discussion that doctors and free clinics were available to most of the migrants and that those who were "not sure" of the clinics may not have had an opprotunity to learn about their existence.

TABLE 9

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION AND HOSPITALIZATION
OF MIGRANTS SURVEYED, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

	Number	Percentage
Physical examination within the last year	366	100.0
Yes	205	56.0
No	161	44.0
Physical examination over one year	366	100.0
One year ago	76	20.8
Two years ago	138	37.7
Three years ago	77	21.0
Four or more years ago	75	20.5
Period of last hospitalization for illness	366	100.0
This year	18	4.9
Last year	28	7.6
Two years ago	26	7.1
Three years ago	30	8.2
Four or more years ago	76	20.8
Never	188	51.4

TABLE 10

AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL FACILITIES TO MIGRANTS SURVEYED, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

	Number	Percentage
Are the services of a doctor available?	366	100.0
Do not know	49	13.4
Yes	309	84.4
No	8	2.2
Availability of a free health clinic	366	100.0
Do not know	65	17.8
Yes	295	80.6
No	6	1.6
Availability of a maternity clinic	366	100.0
Do not know	102	27.8
Yes	207	56.6
No	57	15.6
Methods of paying medical bills	366	100.0
No medical bills	42	11.5
Cash	173	47.2
Time payments	11	3.0
Health Insurance	23	6.3
Veterans' Administration	3	0.8
Relatives pay them	8	2.2
Public Assistance Agency	106	29.0

When asked about the method of paying medical bills, 42 migrants had no medical bills; 173 paid in cash; 106 paid with the help of public assistance agencies; and 23 paid with health insurance. Migrants were asked about their having health and life insurance, and this information is presented in Table 11. Approximately 64 percent of the migrants did not have any life insurance, and nearly 77 percent did not have any health insurance.

TABLE 11

HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE STATUS OF MIGRANTS SURVEYED, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

	Migrants with Families	Migrants without Families	Total Number	Total Percentage
Have Life Insurance	294	72	366	100.0
Yes	113	18	131	35.8
No	181	54	235	64.2
Have Health Insurance	294	72	366	100.0
Yes	73	12	85	23.2
No	221	60	281	76.8

Social Environment

As mentioned previously in this report, most of the migrants worked 5 days per week. Since the period of daylight is longer during the summer months, most of the migrant farmworkers did physical labor for 12 to 14 hours per day. Weekends remained the only time for socialization and relaxation. Dancing and playing baseball were mentioned as the most frequent group activities at the camps. Data concerning social environment are presented in Table 12.

It can be seen from Table 12 that 32 percent of the migrants attended church services. Most of those who attended church services were primarily from Charleston County where the church officials conducted the services at camp sites.

About 69 percent of all the migrants surveyed visited the towns near their camps. Shopping for grocery and other items was the primary reason for visits to town; however, a small number of visits were for health or other reasons. Public health officials, county agents, ministers, school officials, social workers, and welfare officials were mentioned as most frequent visitors to camps.

When asked about the social facilities for youth, 243 of the 366 migrants surveyed did not indicate that such facilities as community centers and church groups were available. Ball parks were mentioned as social facilities for the youth by the others. Community centers and church groups were the social facilities for youths primarily in Charleston County, while ball parks were mentioned by those in Beaufort and Edgefield Counties. For adults, the only social outlets were visits to town, group entertainment at camp, or church groups. Church groups were mentioned only by the migrants surveyed in Charleston County.

TABLE 12-A

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS SURVEYED, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

	Total	Percentage
Church attendance	366	100.0
Yes	116	31.7
No	250	68.3
Visits to town	366	100.0
Yes	253	69.1
No	113	30.9
Reasons for visiting town		
Grocery and other shopping	233	-
To see movies or for other recreation	16	-
To see federal or state officials	8	-
Health purposes	68	-
Other	6	-
Outside visitors to camp		
No one	-	-
Preacher	64	-
Welfare officials	45	-
Social workers	53	-
County agents	87	-
Public health officials	110	-
Friends	75	-
Employment Security officials	1	-

TABLE 12-B

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS SURVEYED, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1971

	Total
Social facilities available to youth	
None in the community	243
Youth Canteens	11
Community Centers	42
Scout groups	-
Church groups	66
Ball parks	52
Social facilities available to adults	
None in the community	189
Civic Clubs	-
Group entertainment in camps	90
Neighborhood Clubs	-
Visits to town	118
Church groups	39

SUMMARY

Approximately 9,000 migrant workers come to South Carolina each year to help with the harvesting of fruit and vegetable crops. In the absence of practical mechanical harvestors, the farmers have to depend upon hand labor for the harvesting of their fruit and vegetable crops. Since the residential labor force is not enough, migrant farmworkers have to be hired during peak harvesting season. The migrant farmworkers who come to South Carolina are a part of the migrant stream that originates in Florida, goes to the New England States, and returns to Florida for the winter. This migrant stream, as it goes through South Carolina, is the principal focus of this study.

Even though the migrant workers are of great help in harvesting fruits and vegetables, it is alleged that they also pose some economic, housing, health and other social problems to communities through which they pass. The objective of this study was to investigate the nature of this situation. In the summer of 1971, 366 migrant farmworkers were interviewed to collect the required data. Emphasis was given to collecting more data about the migrants with families because they face more problems in terms of housing and children's education than do the migrants who come alone.

Most of the migrants had less than a 10th grade education. Approximately 86 percent of the heads of families were between 20 and 55 years of age. For the migrants who came with families, the average family size was 4.8 persons. In good harvest seasons, it is to the advantage of the migrants to bring more family members. Most of the migrants worked 4 to 5 days per week, earned up to $20 per day and reported their living expenses to be up to $50 per week. Only 57 migrants reported some cash savings with none of them having more than $300 in savings.

The majority of the migrants, who lived in housing provided by private individuals, paid less than $5 rent per week and were given one room per family. In some instances, the rent was $10 or $15 per week. A large number of migrants reported tin roof coverings for their housing. About 62 percent of the migrants reported dirt floors for their housing; 60 percent reported not having sanitary sewage disposal facilities; 69 percent had to share a common bathroom with the whole camp and 56 percent did not have inside plumbing.

Of the 294 heads of families surveyed, 143 reported having school age children. Most of these children went to school 7 to 9 months per year. Of the 143 migrants with children, 116 reported that migrant educational centers were available for their children; 14 indicated that they were not, while the remaining 13 did not know that such a center existed. On the whole, the education of migrant children in the summers appears to be handled well by the migrant educational centers.

Both children and adults of migrant families do not know of recreational facilities available to them. Social relationships between members of this group were, for the most part, restricted to camp activities.

The most common illnesses reported by the migrants were high blood pressure, respiratory disorders, and diabetes. Only 12 percent of the migrants surveyed reported that the services of a doctor or a free clinic were not available to them. Approximately 64 percent of the migrants surveyed had no life insurance and 77 percent had no health insurance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The long term solution to the plight of migrant workers is for them to break away from the migrant stream and obtain employment elsewhere. This would require some sort of training of the migrants so that they could be employed as skilled workers. As more efficient mechanical harvestors are developed for fruit and vegetable crops, the need for migrant workers will decrease substantially.

The transformation of migrants from unskilled workers will be a long process. In the meantime, certain things can be done to make life easier for them. Decent housing during their migratory travel remains the most important problem for the migrant workers. The enforcement of existing federal laws concerning migrant housing should give considerable relief to this and similar groups. Counties which hire a large number of migrants could follow the example of Charleston County in providing housing for the migrant workers. County owned housing is not only comfortable, but it also makes it easier for personnel from private and public agencies to approach the migrants and provide them with needed assistance.

The relationship between the crew leader and his crew is another major problem. Crew leaders provide transportation and seek work for migrants. They also negotiate with the employers for wages and the provision of other facilities. An unscrupulous crew leader can, and some times does, use his position to exploit migrants for his advantage. An arrangement between state departments of Employment Security Commissions in different states could probably eliminate the need for crew leaders.

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